Addicted to Facebook
— By Tynaya Frasier

Most teens have a Facebook® account, but what lies beneath the surface is that some teens may actually be addicted to it. Don’t get me wrong, Facebook® is great for virtual communication such as keeping in touch with your friends and family, but when you start to find it hard to log off, it’s beginning to become a problem.

Sometimes the problem can start off being as simple as posting pictures of you and your friends, but when the “likes” and the comments start rolling in, it becomes hard to ignore them, and hours later you are still having long conversations and looking at pictures of people whom you may not even know. It’s not only teens, though. Some adults have this problem too, and even though there’s not a medical diagnosis for it, an addiction to Facebook® can become a serious problem that can negatively interfere with your grades, work, and other parts of your life. According to the New York Times, Facebook® has “350 million members worldwide who, collectively, spend 10 billion minutes there everyday”. With statistics like this, you can see how Facebook® has taken on a life of its own and become an obsession for some users.

If you’re questioning whether or not you are addicted to Facebook®, here are some questions that can help you figure it out:

☐ Do you find yourself losing sleep over Facebook® because you can’t log off?

☐ Are you falling behind with your homework because you’re spending too much time updating your Facebook® status instead of doing your assignments?

☐ Has work become second to social networking?

☐ When you log off of your computer, do you immediately turn to your phone to use your Facebook® application?

If you’ve answered yes to any of these questions, it’s likely that Facebook® is consuming too much of your time. This could also be true for any other social networking site you visit.

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Signs of clinical depression include:
• Feeling sad or empty a lot of the time—for at least 2 weeks
• Not feeling like doing things you used to enjoy
• Feeling irritated a lot of the time or losing your temper easily
• Sleeping a lot, or feeling restless or edgy
• Changes in your eating habits
• Changes to your sleeping patterns
• Finding it harder to concentrate
• Feeling like things will never get better
• Thinking about hurting yourself

The first steps to getting help with depression are noticing the signs and getting help from a trusted adult. Remember, it is not your fault if you become depressed.

For more information about depression, visit: youngwomenshealth.org/depression.html

Emily’s Health Tips

In our society, we sometimes use the word depression in a casual sense, but there is nothing casual about depression. Everybody has a bad day once in a while, but having a feeling such as sadness that lasts a long time is very different. Depression is a psychological condition that affects your feelings, behaviors, and thoughts. It can happen to people at any age, including teens. Sometimes it happens as a result of a stressful event, and other times it may seem like it just snuck up on you. If you are depressed, you may or may not notice changes in yourself, but people who are close to you will often notice things. Likewise, if you are close to someone who is truly depressed, you will usually notice a big change in that person’s behavior or mood. It is important to try to understand the difference between feeling sad or “blue” and being what is called, “clinically depressed.”
For more information about how to become an Internet Mentor, visit: isafe.org
If you would like to watch the Netsmart videos, visit: netsmartz.org

Addicted to Facebook, continued...

Luckily, this is an addiction that you can shake, but you have to commit to the following things.

★ Keep track of what you actually do on Facebook®, and how much time you’re spending on the site. This can help you pinpoint where the problem lies. For example: Are you playing games, chatting with friends, or searching for old friends? Before you can figure out how to kick the Facebook® habit, you need to admit that you have a problem.

★ Next, give yourself a set amount of time to update your status and check your news feed (try for no more than once a day!)

★ Instead of chatting with your best friend online, go for a walk and catch up.

★ Instead of turning on your computer, find a good book to read, or listen to music.

★ If cutting down on your Facebook® time doesn’t work, de–activate your account for a while.

Virtual communication can be a great thing, but you have to balance it with other important activities in your life, such as school, work, and spending “real” time with family and friends. Social networking shouldn’t come first in your life, and if it does, it’s time to take a break and focus on what really matters.

For more ways on how to beat your Facebook® addiction, visit netaddiction.com